



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Thursday, January 8, 2009
12:10 pm. Walter Hall. Free

Thursdays at Noon

THE ICE AGE and BEYOND

Songs by Canadian Women Composers

Patricia Green, mezzo-soprano
Midori Koga, piano

Airs of Men Long Dead (1989)

- i. Waiting
- ii. Wolf
- iii. Sycamore
- iv. Song

Three Sung Songs (1964)

- i. Divining
- ii. Life (Hsin ch'i-chi)
- iii. Let the harp speak (Yen chi-tao)

Ice Age (1986)

Echo (1988)

City Night

- i. Night in the City
- ii. You seek
- iii. My moonlit darling
- iv. Reach for sanity
- v. We sleep unsettled
- vi. The blind cannot judge

Emily Doolittle (b.1972)
Text: Forrest Pierce

Barbara Pentland (1912-2000)
Chinese poets, trans. Clara Candlin

Barbara Pentland
Text: Dorothy Livesay

Isabelle Panneton (b. 1955)
Text: Daniel Guénette

Alice Ping Yee Ho (b. 1960)
Text: Bo Wen Chan

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TEXTS

AIRS OF MEN LONG DEAD (Forrest Pierce)

Waiting

I am waiting for the evening
you will decide that it is over.
then the candlelight on the wood
will say it's over too.
Nutmeg, cinnamon, all the spices of winter,
they are coming with me.

Wolf

I am lying about the ribbon,
but the heat of your breath
is an angry curse to me.
The mead halls emptied,
the long ships burning;
the heat, red like eyes,
like a curse you shout when I put my hand,
trembling, into your mouth.
It is a comfort:
eat it if you wish.

Sycamore

The sycamore's leaf
is broad as a man's hand.
It will hold five more drops of rain.

Song

We sang through the night
'till our tongues were tired,
our lips numb from humming.

The motets, the madrigals,
the airs of men long dead,
and we, singing to the moon,
singing down that long road too.

The touch of the tip of the tongue
on the teeth, and the fading scent of breath.
The old men, the old ways,
singing songs ahead into the (deep) night.

THREE SUNG SONGS

Translations by Clara M. Candlin

1. Divining: Huang T'ing Chien

I wish to see but cannot see,
I wish to meet, but near I cannot be.
I test and ask how much he loves me still.
The reed reveals it not.
Such hatefulness!
The tears I cannot stay
but bear my grief of human sorrow
like to this there is no skill
to sound its depth.

2. Life: Hsin ch'i-Chi

Ten thousand dim activities
have swiftly passed:
a hundred years like rushes early seared
or willows withered and decayed.

And now in life, of value
what is left to do?
to drink: to roam: to sleep.
to pay one's tax before it is demanded:
to estimate one's income and expenditure!
Your old men still control a few affairs--
bamboos, the hills, the streams.

3. Let the Harp Speak (Yen Chi-Tao)

Raindrops bid farewell to clouds and fall.
Flowing streams return not to their springs
sorrow that remains, when will it cease?

Bitter as the kernel of a lotus seed is my heart
curbing tears, I cannot sing
Let the harp strings speak for me.
Sing the wish to meet again!
Can it be?

ICE AGE (Dorothy Livesay)

In this coming cold
devouring our wheat fields and Russia's
there'll be no shadow nor sign of shadow,
all cloud shroud, endless rain, eternal snow

In this coming cold which we have fashioned
out of our vain jet pride
the supersonic planes will shriek
destruction upon the benign yin yang
ancient and balanced universe.

Worse than an animal,
man tortures his prey
given sun's energy and fire's blaze
he has ripped away leaf, bird, flower
is moving to destroy the still centre
heart's power.

Now who among us will lift a finger to declare
I am of God good?
Who among us dares to be righteous?

ECHO (Danielle Guénette)

("La Part de l'Ode", éditions du Noroît, 1988)

S'il est permis aux mers
d'user d'un même refrain
je reviendrai sur ces bords
pencher ce corps qu'érode leur vérité

non pour éprouver encore
la dureté de pierres
galets peut-être qui sait
enclos ou non de mort et de secret

mais pour le lieu
ainsi que serait le temple
mentalement
où cela sourd fleurit et s'échoue

avec
malgré la coupe des vents
dont se rétracte la paix
la vie si chère aux yeux
de qui la perd à chaque pas

ECHO (Transl. C. Poirier)

If the seas are allowed
to use a similar refrain,
I will return to these shores
Body bent upon eroding their truth

not to test again the hardness of the stones,
pebbles, perhaps who knows
enclosing or not,
death and secret.

but for the place,
which would thus be the temple
mentally
where it is sounds, flowers and collapses again

--with--
despite the slicing winds which peace withdraws from--
life so dear to the eyes,
from which it is lost with each step.